

HIGHWAY DEPT. HAS COME A LONG WAY UNDER LEWIS RANDALL

When Lewis Randall of Summer St. joined the Duxbury Highway Department in 1933 the only vehicle it had was a pick-up truck owned by the Superintendent, the late Edward S. O'Neil, uncle of former Police Chief James O'Neil of Tremont St.

Nineteen years ago, when Randall became Superintendent, the town generously bought him a pick-up truck, and in the following year gave him an International truck. In the early days of the department, equipment was hired from the late Maurice Chandler, Eden Soule, and others. Many of them were Model-T's.

When roads were tarred, sand was piled by the roadside and sprinkled by shovel over the hot mix.

Came progress. The "Tramp House" that stood on Depot St. land now owned by the Leo Daleys was moved by Walter Prince to Highway Department land at the bottom of the hill behind Old Town Hall and The First Parish Church. Its jail cell -- bars and all -- became the official office of the department. Many a story can you tell about the almshouse on the poor farm, popularly known as the Tramp House, for here knights of the road who jumped off the train from Boston at the railroad terminal on Depot St., could, provided they chopped enough wood, obtain free lodging for the night.

Here, too, prisoners were confined before being taken by train the following morning to Plymouth District Court.

The jail cell is still there, and the bars are still on its windows. And what about the tool shed on the premises. It, too, evokes memories, if you have the kind of memories Lewis Randall has.

Originally this structure housed Duxbury's hand-pumper, pride of the Duxbury Fire Department when H.E. Merry was chief.

Progress continued. Today our Highway Department has ten trucks, a front-end loader with sweeper and other equipment and a tractor for mowing roadside greenery.

Since Duxbury is some 30 square miles in area, the road maintenance and building problems are not small. Duxbury has about 115 miles of roadways -- roughly twice as many as has Kingston. The Highway Department also takes care of town landings and hauls out floats and repairs them during the winter. There are nine full-time employees who are kept busy, repairing streets, and plowing and sanding them when necessary so the fire and police departments, along with regular drivers, can traverse them.

Maintenance of Powder Point Bridge is another exacting chore, and did you know that 50 feet of the ocean end of this bridge were lopped off during the Portland Storm of 1898?

The repair of Powder Point Bridge after the hurricane of 1954 was the hardest assignment, for the bridge buckled and was twisted out of shape.

For 19 years, the town relied on Lewis Randall to take charge of Duxbury streets, and he did so in "a meritorious manner and with a devotion seldom equalled," the selectmen told him.

"Because of your fine work Duxbury has been proud of its highway system and has boasted that few towns could equal the excellence of our snow removal program.

"With one of the longest and most rustic bridges in the whole area to care for, you have coped with fire damage, hurricane damage, and general wear and tear. Today the fine condition of the bridge is a monument to your good work.

"No matter how much we may say, we would have to leave much more unsaid, for each year of your service had its own quota of problems to be solved, special services to be performed, and always the routine maintenance work to handle." "We want you to know we appreciate your fine services and we go forward into 1965 knowing we shall miss you and that we shall often need your advice and general knowledge. However, retirement was your own wish, and we all concur in wishing that it may bring you the greatest happiness and satisfaction possible."

Marshall Whitney succeeded Mr. Randall on Jan. 1, 1965. Mr. and Mrs. Randall have six sons, Raymond, who lives in Orange, Calif., is a Chief Petty Officer with 23 years of service in the U.S. Navy.

Robert, next in line, works in Boston. Lewis, Jr., is a contractor in Sacramento, Calif., and Philip is a partner in the constructing firm of Haslett-Randall, with headquarters in Quincy. Russell teaches in the Plymouth-Carver High School, and Keith, the youngest, operates a hair-styling establishment in South Yarmouth. The Randalls have six grandchildren.



LEWIS RANDALL

The Clipper wishes one of the best department heads in Duxbury many happy and fruitful years of retirement.